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Let's McCarthy, Eugene
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The CIA and Foreign Policy

SEN. EUGENE J. McCarthy [D., Minn.] has introduced a resolution calling for a Senate panel to look into the central intelligence agency's influence on foreign policy.

Sen. McCarthy says the inquiry is not intended to question the concept or necessity of this super-secret spy organization. It is aimed at finding out if CIA is overstepping its authority in creating as well as carrying out policy. McCarthy thinks there is "significant evidence" indicating such abuses, and offers as examples the Dominican Republic and Viet Nam, where the agency reportedly has been feuding with the American military command over jurisdiction and techniques.

Virtually nothing is known of the CIA, except by a select few inside the government. Its payrolls and operating funds are hidden in other annual appropriations, and the names of its employees are classified. This is as it should be if CIA is to operate effectively.

This being so, it doesn't necessarily follow that CIA should be immune from congressional examination, particularly if it is starting to behave as if it were a branch of the state department or white house advisory wing.

The first public embarrassment suffered by the CIA came with the crash of a U-2 plane inside the Soviet Union, and capture of its pilot, Francis Gary Powers, who was in the CIA's employ. The ill-timed flight was launched shortly before the Paris summit conference at a time when east-west relations seemed on the eve of a general thaw, following former Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev's visit to this country and his proposal to have President Eisenhower visit Russia.

The U-2 flight, which changed all that, was also probably the first time the American public began to question the credibility of official pronouncements, for it had been told the U-2 was an errant weather plane. This credibility was further shaken by the Bay of Pigs fiasco, in which the CIA played a prominent role. These mistakes, however, were not the fault of the CIA exclusively, other government offices helped.

The central intelligence agency has performed some invaluable services as an information gathering agency, such as its reconnaissance flights which pinpointed the construction of Russian missile bases in Cuba. Such information is essential to the government in determining policy and courses of action. It is a needed agency of our government.

It is also essential, however, that the conduct of foreign policy remains in the hands of the President and state department. If there have been any encroachments by the CIA in this area, it should be stopped, and can be, without compromising security.